

55.

THE
S P E E C H
OF THE RIGHT HON.
CHARLES JAMES FOX:
CONTAINING THE
DECLARATION OF HIS PRINCIPLES,
RESPECTING THE
PRESENT CRISIS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
AND
A REFORM
IN THE
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE.

SPOKEN AT THE
WHIG CLUB OF ENGLAND, Dec. 4, 1792.

JOHN GREGORY, ESQ. TREASURER.
EDWARD HALL, ESQ. SECRETARY.

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR JAMES RIDGWAY, YORK-STREET, ST. JAMES'S
SQUARE.

Price Two-pence, or 100 Copies for 12s. 6d.



S P E E C H

OF THE RIGHT HON.

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

A MOST numerous meeting of the noblemen and gentlemen, members of this Club, was held this day at the London Tavern.

The Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the chair.

It was with the most heart-felt satisfaction that we witnessed the perfect harmony in opinion which reigned in the Club, where we saw assembled the illustrious characters, to whose efforts the country look up for the

maintenance of the true principles of our Constitution. In drinking the toasts regularly given at their meetings, the spirit of the Club was manifested in a clear and enthusiastic manner. The *Rights of the People* drew from the whole room reiterated bursts of applause ; and when the health of Mr. Fox was given, the cordial and unanimous testimony borne to the merits of this **GREAT** and **CONSISTENT**, **FIRM** and **PERSEVERING STATESMAN**, prove that to him and his friends alone, they look for the restoration of concord, and the reunion of all hearts.

Such was the expression of the company on drinking his health, which was given by Lord R. Spencer. Mr. Fox returned his thanks, and shewed how greatly superior the manliness of true wisdom is to all the sinister arts of subtlety and finesse. We lament that we are able only to give his speech from imperfect recollection, but though we cannot imitate the

the neatness of his eloquence, we believe that we shall be accurate in the substance, as he made a very forcible and a most satisfactory impression on the mind of the writer. To those who, like ourselves, have closely observed the conduct of Mr. Fox for sixteen years, the profession of his creed is unnecessary; but to new men, and in the present day of *pretended innovation*, it will be highly interesting to all real friends of the Constitution, to read his admirable exposition of the principles of the Whig Club, as declaratory of his own motives of conduct.

Mr. Fox said, “ I rise, gentlemen, to thank you for the very kind and flattering manner in which you have drank my health. You know it is not my custom to take up your time in this Club by making speeches, or to interrupt your festivity by any thing personal to myself; but the circumstances of the times, and the extraordinary measures of which you

have been the witnesses, demand, perhaps, of every public man, an explicit declaration of his principles. To you, gentlemen, I certainly should not think it necessary to make any other profession of my sentiments, than by an appeal to my past actions. Were any other professions necessary, I should say, that in the toasts which constantly animate our hearts, and add to our conviviality in this Club, I find a perfect exposition of my principles, and profess that it is my study, as I think it is my duty, to regulate my conduct thereby,

“ I declare then, that I am attached to ‘ *The House of Brunswick*’—because I hope, because I believe, that : *They will never forget the principles which placed their family upon the Throne of Great Britain.*’

“ For the same reason I am attached to ‘ *The CONSTITUTION, according to the principles ASSEATED at the Revolution,*’—an attachment

tachment to which makes the foundation of this Club, as you have uniformly *asserted* from the first moment of your institution.

“ It follows, therefore, that I am, and I declare myself to be an advocate for ‘ *The Rights of the People*,’ upon whose *Rights* alone can, in my opinion, be founded any real, sound, and legitimate Government, since the very end and object of all just Governments is the

SECURITY, FREEDOM, and HAPPINES of the PEOPLE.

“ For this reason, I think it the duty of every citizen, whatever may be his station, to exert himself in procuring every **IMPROVEMENT of OUR FORM of GOVERNMENT**, of which it is susceptible, and to assist in meliorating the condition of the people to the utmost, from which it follows, that I shall ever act most cordially and stedfastly with *The Friends of Freedom.*

“ In pursuing this honourable course, it will animate our zeal, and invigorate our constancy, to pay grateful homage in our toasts to our glorious ancestors ; and though we entertain the lively hope that we shall never have to meet the conflict like them, yet should our security, peace, and freedom, the fairest and most beautiful fruits of the tree of liberty, be ever again in danger, I trust we shall all be ready *To bleed like Hampden in the field, or like Sydney on the scaffold.*

“ From the same motive, and from the experience of the benefits flowing from the connection of men of principle, I am equally ready to declare my gratitude to the ILLUSTRIOUS FAMILIES, by whose manly exertions the Empire obtained its freedom ; and knowing the advantages that must be derived from their cordial co-operation in the cause which is so dear to us all, I heartily wish *That the names of Russel and Cavendish may be ever*

ever united in defence of the liberties of their country.

“ These, gentlemen, are my sentiments, and it shall be my only boast, as it is the character of the Whig Club, *Never to slacken my efforts in adversity, nor to forget my principles in prosperity.*

“ And if the time should ever come, when PRIDE, PREJUDICE, or CORRUPTION, should set up a stubborn resistance to all correction of abuses, and refuse to listen to the just pretensions of the people, I am most truly ready to join with the Club in their last most excellent sentiment, in which they breathe at once a temperate, a conciliatory, and a determined spirit, and to hope that *The example of one Revolution may prevent the necessity of another.*— A sentiment which I trust will have a seasonable influence on all the orders of society, by which they may know and learn that we shall

ever

ever rally round the Constitution, prepared with one soul to guard it from every violent assault, but equally attentive and zealous to preserve it in its full and genuine vigour against even the less perceptible effects of natural decay."

We cannot describe the emotion which this short, clear, specific declaration made on the Club—Every heart responded to the sentiments of constitutional firmness, and of seasonable conciliation which it breathed. The Duke of Portland, the Earl of Guildford, Mr. Grey, Mr. Sheridan—men, whom it has been the fashion of the insidious to describe as at variance, all joined in the heartfelt acclamations of the Society, and proved that there is but one opinion in the firm phalanx of the constitutional opposition to the present measures of Government. The speech had the more electrical effect, from the ingenuity with which Mr. Fox introduced

duced all the constitutional toasts of the Club
—they are distinguished by *italics*.

Mr. House gave *Mr. Fox, and success to the principles he has so clearly described*—which was drank with extacy.

The Duke of Portland and the Whig Interest, throughout Great Britain.—His Grace returned thanks in a short and apt address,

Mr. Byng, and the Independent Freeholders of Middlesex.—Mr. Byng gratefully thanked the Club.

Alderman Sawbridge, Plomer, Newnham, Skinner and Combe, Sheriff Tebbs, and all the other friends of freedom in the Corporation of London.—Mr. Alderman Newnham and Mr. Alderman Combe, who were present, returned thanks in short addresses.

Mr.

Mr. Plomer and Mr. Baker, and the Independent Freeholders of Hertfordshire.

Mr. Grey, and the Independent Freeholders of Northumberland.—Mr. Grey, in returning thanks, said, that in circumstances like the present, it behoved every man to declare his sentiments, and he rejoiced to say, that he could do this in very few words indeed; for he had only to declare, that he agreed in every word of the admirable speech of his Right Honourable Friend. The creed of Mr. Fox was his—it declared the principles which should be the rule of his political life, and which pursued with temper, zeal, and activity, must secure to this country the most durable felicity. He could not avoid, at the same time, to express his happiness, that thus all the friends of true freedom were united in the glorious cause of maintaining the Constitution on its genuine basis.

Lord

Lord Viscount Galway proposed the health of the Lord Mayor—a general murmur of disapprobation was heard from every corner of the room. Mr. Fox prevented any indignity to the name of the City Magistrate, by observing that in drinking the health of the well known Constitutional Alderman, they had added all the other *Friends of Freedom* in the Corporation.—If the Lord Mayor was a real Friend to Freedom, he was included in that toast—if he was not a Friend to Freedom, his health ought not to be drunk in that Club. Mr. Fox then gave

Mr. Sheridan, the steady opposer of the increase of the Excise Laws, and may it ever be the task of Genius to combat its everlasting enemy, Despotism. Mr. Sheridan made a short but elegant reply. The times, indeed, he said, demanded that every man should speak out, and like Mr. Grey, he

had only to declare, that he perfectly coincided with his Right Honourable Friend, in the clear and manly exposition which he had given. It has been my pride to act through life upon these principles, and I rejoice to see the cordiality with which they have been received this day.—It is the triumph of wisdom and principle, and its effect on the public mind will be equal to its impression on this Club.

“Mr. Erskine, and the freedom of the press.”—Mr. Erskine had, unfortunately, retired before the toast was given; but we trust that the friends of the freedom of the press will see its two shining advocates; namely, Mr. Erskine and Mr. Pigott, at the intended meeting on Saturday next.

Before he left the chair, which was at eight o'clock, Mr. Fox begged the attention of the meeting

meeting to one other toast, more comprehensive than any which had been given,

“ EQUAL LIBERTY TO ALL MANKIND.”

There were many other toasts of the same animating kind, and the meeting separated with the hope that all those who profess attachment to the constitution would regulate their zeal by the temper and moderation which its most splendid supporters thus manifest.

THE LAST DECLARATION
OF THE
LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY
OF
4 OC 58
FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE,

In Answer to the PLACE and PENSION SOCIETY, held at
the Crown and Anchor, in the Strand, under the specious names of
LIBERTY AND PROPERTY PRESERVERS,

Is this Day published,

Price One-Penny, or One Hundred Copies for Seven-Shillings,

